AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please withdraw Claims **16-20** from consideration without prejudice. Please also add Claims **31** and **32**.

Claims 1-15 (Previously cancelled)

Claims 16-20 (Cancelled)

21. (AMENDED) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device having a semiconductor region, the method comprising the steps of:

forming at least two conductive posts overlying the semiconductor region to form a structure;

encapsulating the structure and at least one of the at least two conductive posts to form a planarized cured passivation layer; and

exposing the at least one of the at least two conductive posts through the planarized cured passivation layer to form the semiconductor device, wherein the step of forming at least two conductive posts comprises a lift-off step.

22. (AMENDED) The method of Claim **21**, wherein ~~the step of forming at least two conductive posts comprises a lift-off step, and~~ at least one of the at least ~~one~~ two conductive post~~s~~ comprise~~s~~ at least one of Pt, Au and Ti.

23. **(AMENDED)** The method of Claim **21**, wherein the step of encapsulating the structure and at least one of the at least two conductive posts comprises the steps of:

forming the passivation layer by spinning on benzocyclobutene ("BCB"); and

heating the passivation layer in an N_2 atmosphere to a temperature substantially in the range of 250-350°C for a period substantially in the range of 1-30 minutes, ~~such that~~ the passivation layer ~~is~~ spun on, cured and planarized.

24. **(ORIGINAL)** The method of Claim **21**, wherein the step of exposing the at least one of the at least two conductive posts comprises the step of etching the planarized cured passivation layer.

25. **(AMENDED)** The method of Claim ~~24~~ 32, wherein the ~~step of etching the planarized cured passivation layer comprises a~~ Reactive Ion Etching step ~~and~~ employs a chemistry of at least one of CF_4:O_2 at an approximate ratio of 40:60 and SF_6:O_2 at an approximate ratio of 6:10.

26. **(AMENDED)** A method of fabricating a semiconductor device having a semiconductor region, the method comprising the steps of:

forming at least two conductive posts of about the same height overlying the semiconductor region to form a structure;

encapsulating the structure and at least one of the at least two conductive posts to form a planarized cured passivation layer; and

exposing the at least one of the at least two conductive posts through the planarized cured passivation layer to form the semiconductor device, wherein the step of forming at least two conductive posts comprises a lift-off step.

27. **(AMENDED)** The method of Claim **26**, wherein ~~the step of forming at least two conductive posts comprises a lift-off step, and~~ at least one of the at least two ~~one~~ conductive posts comprises at least one of Pt, Au and Ti.

28. **(AMENDED)** The method of Claim **26**, wherein the step of encapsulating the structure and at least one of the at least two conductive posts comprises the steps of:

forming the passivation layer by spinning on benzocyclobutene ("BCB"); and

heating the passivation layer in an N_2 atmosphere to a temperature substantially in the range of 250-350°C for a period substantially in the range of 1-30 minutes, ~~such that~~ the passivation layer ~~is~~ spun on, cured and planarized.

29. **(ORIGINAL)** The method of Claim **26**, wherein the step of exposing the at least one of the at least two conductive posts comprises the step of etching the planarized cured passivation layer.

30. (AMENDED) The method of Claim 29, wherein the step of etching the planarized cured passivation layer comprises a Reactive Ion Etching step ~~and employs a chemistry of at least one of CF_4:O_2 at an approximate ratio of 40:60 and SF_6:O_2 at an approximate ratio of 6:10~~.

31. (NEW) The method of Claim 30, wherein the ~~step of etching the planarized cured passivation layer comprises a~~ Reactive Ion Etching step ~~and~~ employs a chemistry of at least one of CF_4:O_2 at an approximate ratio of 40:60 and SF_6:O_2 at an approximate ratio of 6:10.

32. (NEW) The method of Claim 24, wherein the step of etching the planarized cured passivation layer comprises a Reactive Ion Etching step.